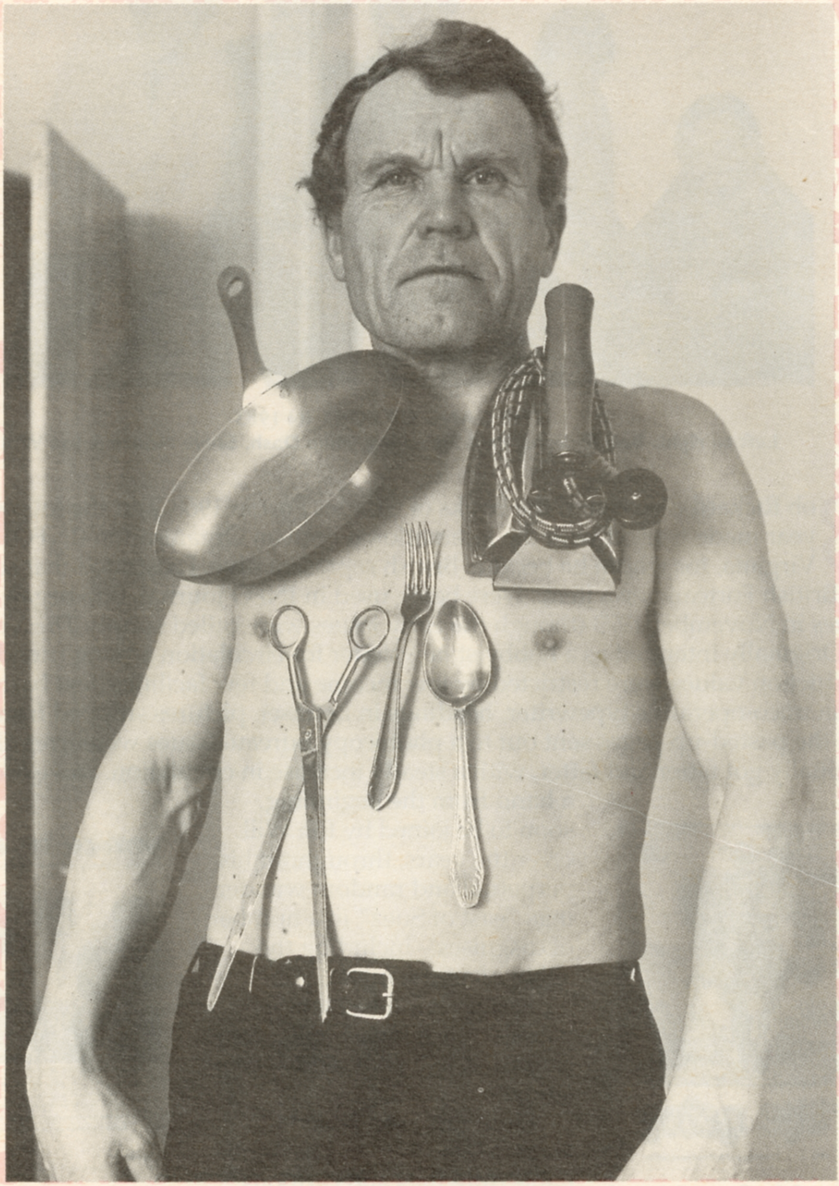
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

TION ● STRANGER THAN FICTION ● STR



TS 20 YEARS OF PHOTO-HIGHLIGHTS 2
S FROM THE PAGES OF FORTEAN TIMES F

FOREWORD

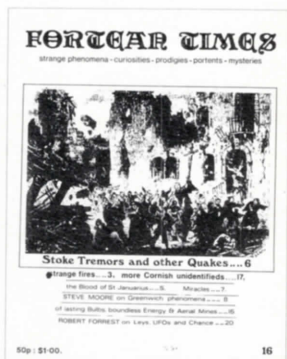
THE GANG OF FORT IN 1983
Left to right: Bob Rickard, Paul Sieveking, Mike Dash, Steve Moore & Ion Will

Bob Rickard discovered the books of Charles Fort in 1968, and the following year made contact with the international Fortean Organisation (INFO) in Virginia, for whom he became British representative. Frustrated that so few of the British Fortean news items were being used in INFO Journal, Bob began ***Fortean Times*** in November 1973 (though the early issues were called simply ***The News***).

Originally intended as a hobbyist newsletter for circulation among friends, the production values were restricted by low income and few facilities: text bashed out on an unco-operative typewriter, headings in Letraset, pictures snipped from papers and the pasted-up pages sent out to a photocopy bureau. Issues were irregular, but gradually got fatter and fatter, with a steady increase in circulation. Steve Moore lent a hand from the beginning, soon to be joined by Ion Will. Over the years, throughout his perpetual and random wanderings "east of Suez" in a number of disguises – including the abbot of a Sri Lankan monastery – Ion has sent us valuable clippings, books, postcards and letters of wild speculation.

Cover of the first edition of The News, published in November 1973.

Hunt Emerson joined the team in late 1974, and his inimitable drawings and cartoons have appeared in the magazine since issue 8. Janet and Colin


FORTEAN TIMES
strange phenomena - curiosities - prodigies - portents - mysteries
Stoke Tremors and other Quakes....6
50p : $1·00.
16

With issue 16 The News turned into the Fortean Times in 1976.

Bord have also been associated with the magazine since the early days. After the publication of their *Mysterious Britain* and *The Secret Country*, they moved to Wales and set up their picture libraries, including (in collaboration with Bob Rickard) the Fortean Picture Library.

The News was renamed ***Fortean Times*** with issue 16 in June 1976. The new title emerged from correspondence between Bob Rickard and Paul Willis, *INFO Journal* editor. What the world was waiting for, they imagined, was a Fortean version of *The Times*, full of weird and wonderful news and read by millions world-wide.

Charles Fort contemplates his invention: Supercheckers

GANG OF FORT

Paul Sieveking was introduced to Bob in 1978 by their mutual friend, Ion Will, and joined the 'Gang of Fort' as associate editor. The Gang used to meet every Tuesday afternoon above the science-fiction bookshop *Dark They Were And Golden Eyed* in Soho, where they would open the post, chortle over the latest japes of fate, and receive the monster-hunters and weird-watchers who were passing through town. Paul's first contributions appeared in FT28, which was printed by Uri Paz, an Israeli entrepreneur, in northern Greece and shipped to London in the boot of a tourist bus.

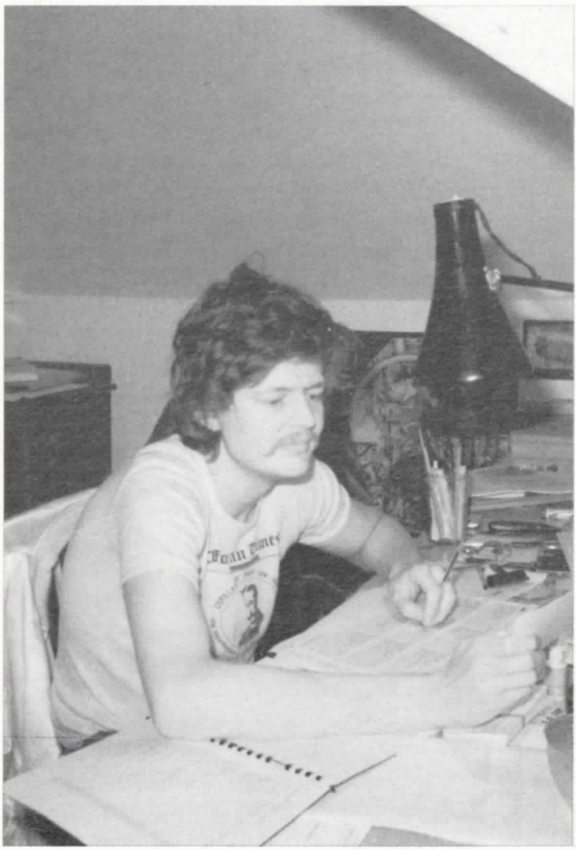
FT29, with full typesetting and a larger format, had a limited distribution through the news trade in the summer of 1979; sales were quite encouraging, but for financial and personal reasons a regular news-stand distribution could not be maintained at that time.

FT30 appeared at the very end of the decade and established the nameless format (230mm x 165mm) derived by random attrition from folded American foolscap, which we used until FT57 in the Spring of 1991. Mike Dash joined the crew in the summer of 1983 and he has been a staltwart at Fortean Towers ever since. While our intention was to be a quarterly, circumstances dictated that we published two or three times a year as a 'sporadical'. In the summer of 1991 ***Fortean Times*** joined the stable of independent publisher John Brown, and launched itself onto the nation's news-stands with a more professional format and distribution.

SCOOPS

Over the years, we have often been the first to cover major mysteries in any depth; we discussed the metal-bending of Uri Geller in January 1974, the Falmouth monster in April 1976, the Surrey puma and friends in January 1976, the Martian 'Sphinx' (with photographs) in January 1976 and crop circles in the summer of 1983. In the summer of 1981 we detailed the now-famous spontaneous combustion of a Welsh pensioner before its police investigator, John Haymer, went public with the story.

Fortean Times editor Bob Rickard at his desk. Fortean Times is a genuine 'cottage industry' and has never had an office.



Paul Sieveking tackles the never-ending pile of correspondence that Fortean Times generates.

ASTOUNDING

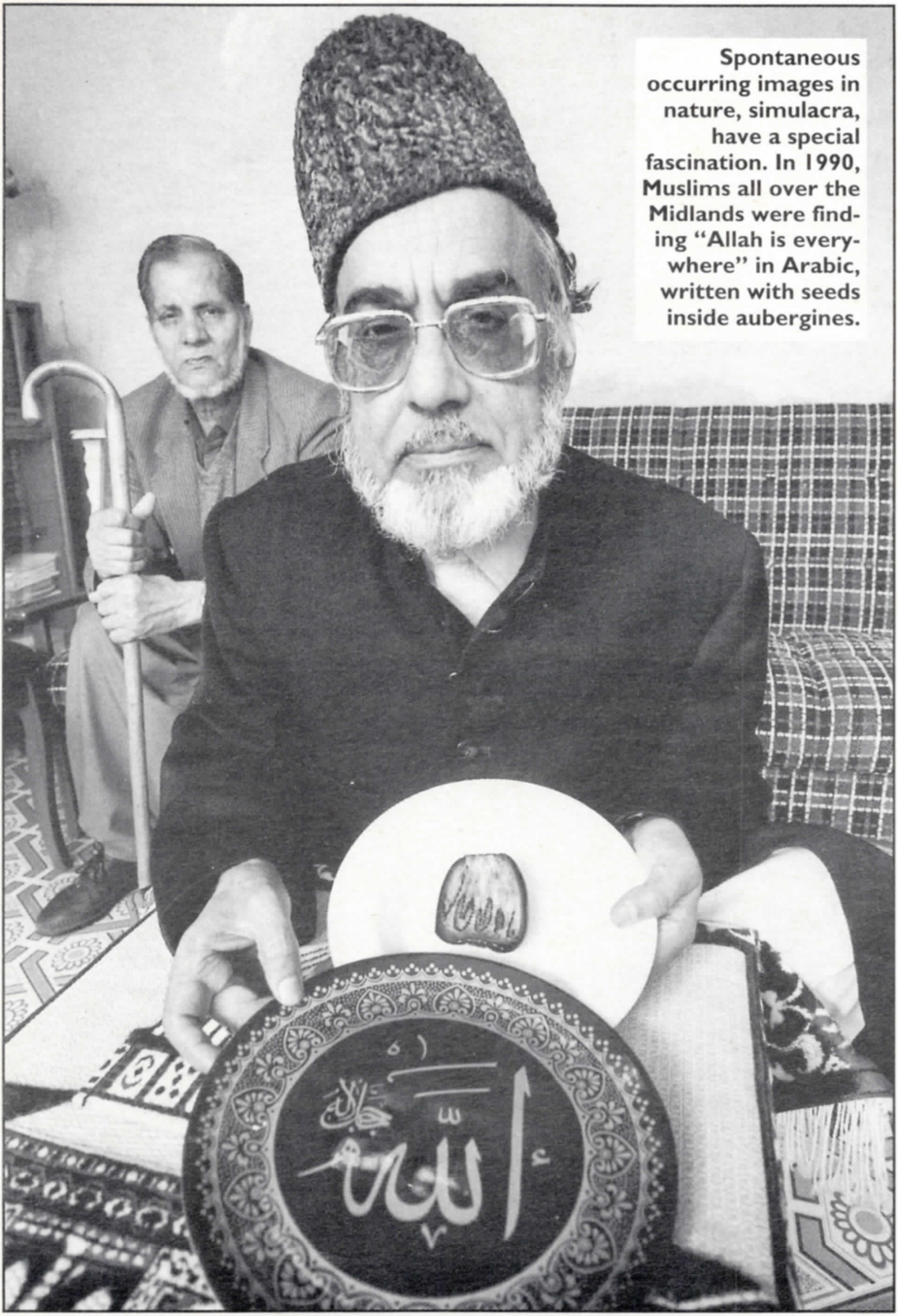
Subscribers over the years have included: Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead, Kate Bush and David Byrne; Warren Mitchell, Bob Hoskins and Jackie Gleason, Colin Wilson and Robert Anton Wilson; and members of the aristocracy such as The Duchess of Argyll and Prince Charles of the Belgians. And then there's Jeremy Beadle, who said of the magazine "I generally devour the latest edition in a single sitting. I never cease to be amazed, enthralled and delighted."

"There are very few things in the world," wrote Lyall Watson, "which are consistently rewarding, revealing or worth receiving. ***Fortean Times*** is one of them."

This booklet offers a sampler of photographic highlights in celebration of our first twenty years of reporting on strange phenomena and experiences, prodigies and portents.

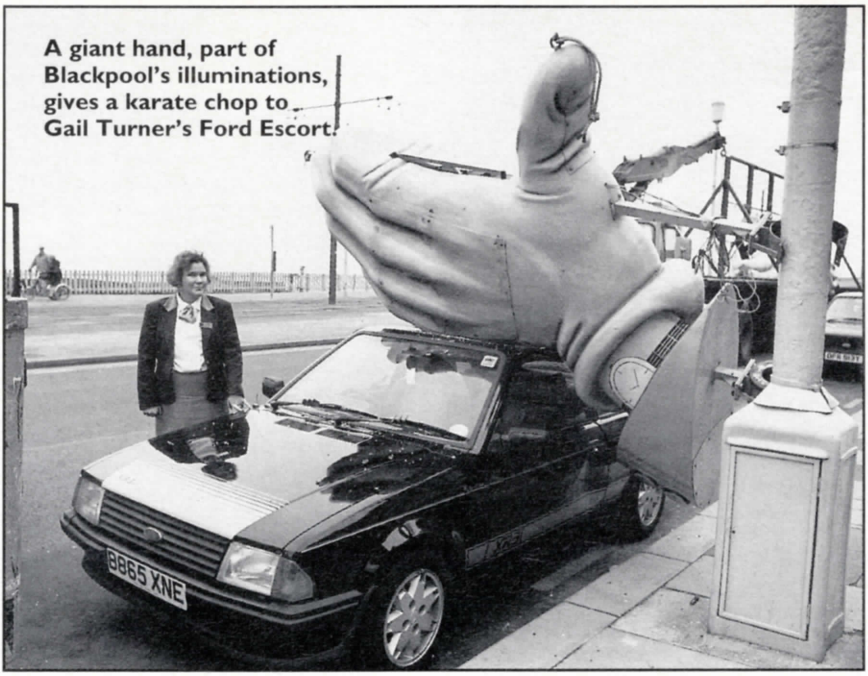
Bob Rickard & Paul Sieveking

AUBERGINES FROM ALLAH

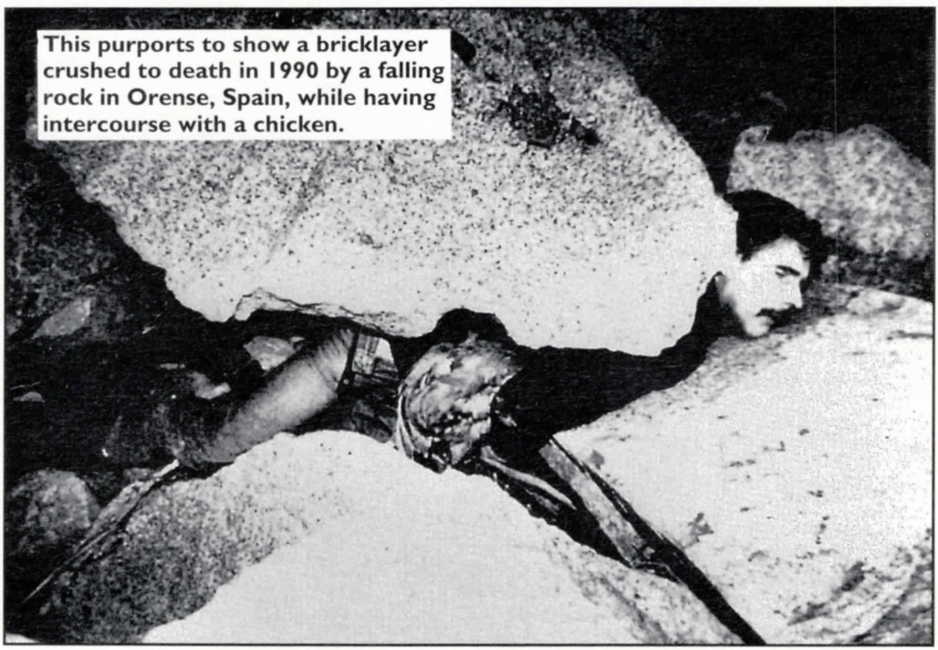


Spontaneous occurring images in nature, simulacra, have a special fascination. In 1990, Muslims all over the Midlands were finding "Allah is everywhere" in Arabic, written with seeds inside aubergines.

KARATE CHOP CAR

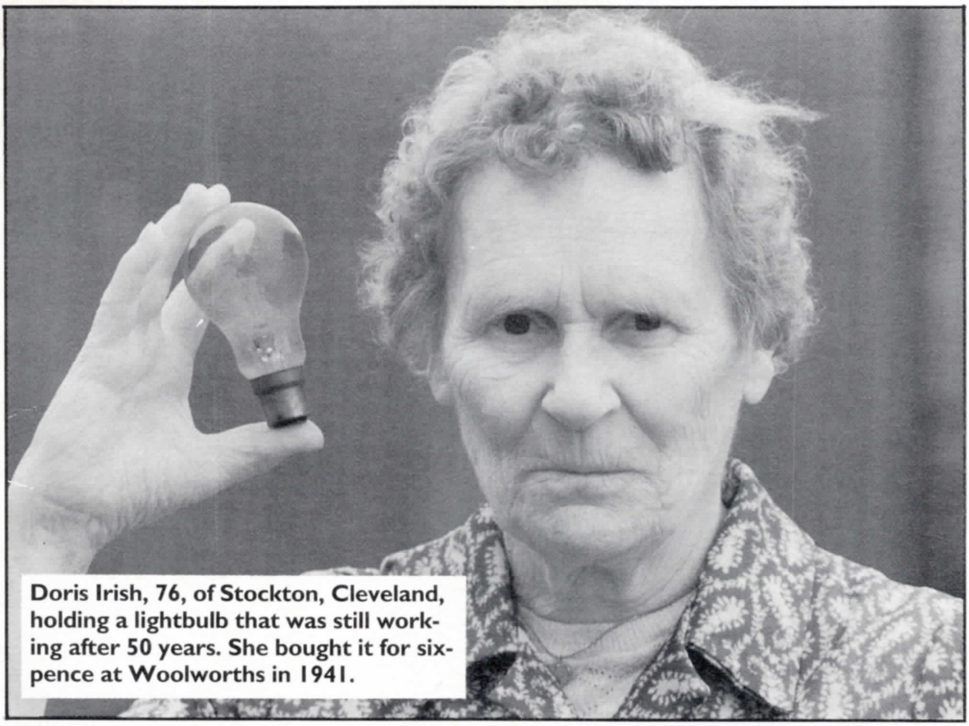


A giant hand, part of Blackpool's illuminations, gives a karate chop to Gail Turner's Ford Escort.

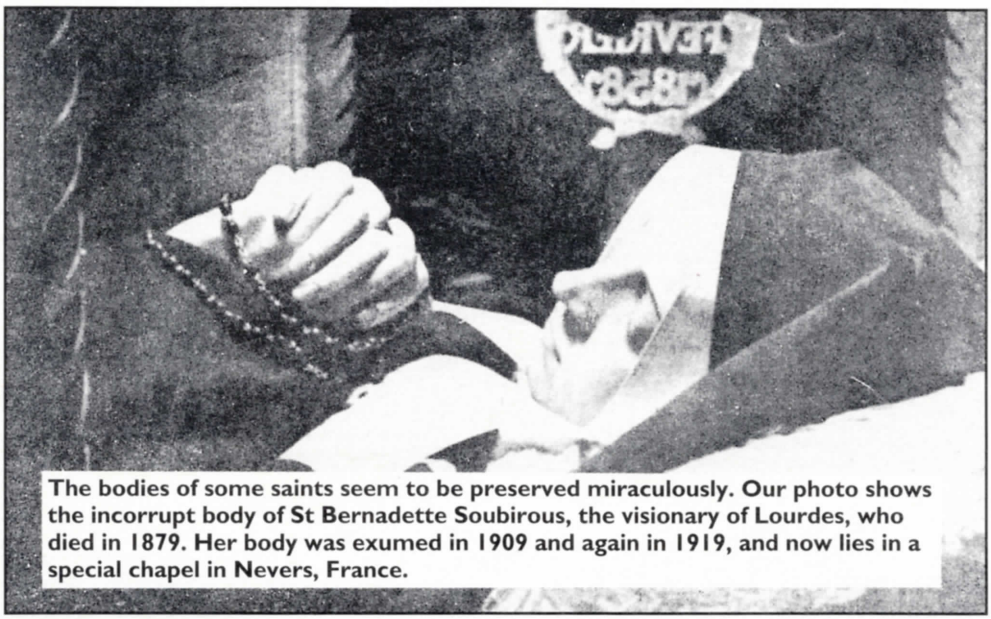


This purports to show a bricklayer crushed to death in 1990 by a falling rock in Orense, Spain, while having intercourse with a chicken.

CHICKEN LOVE TRAGEDY



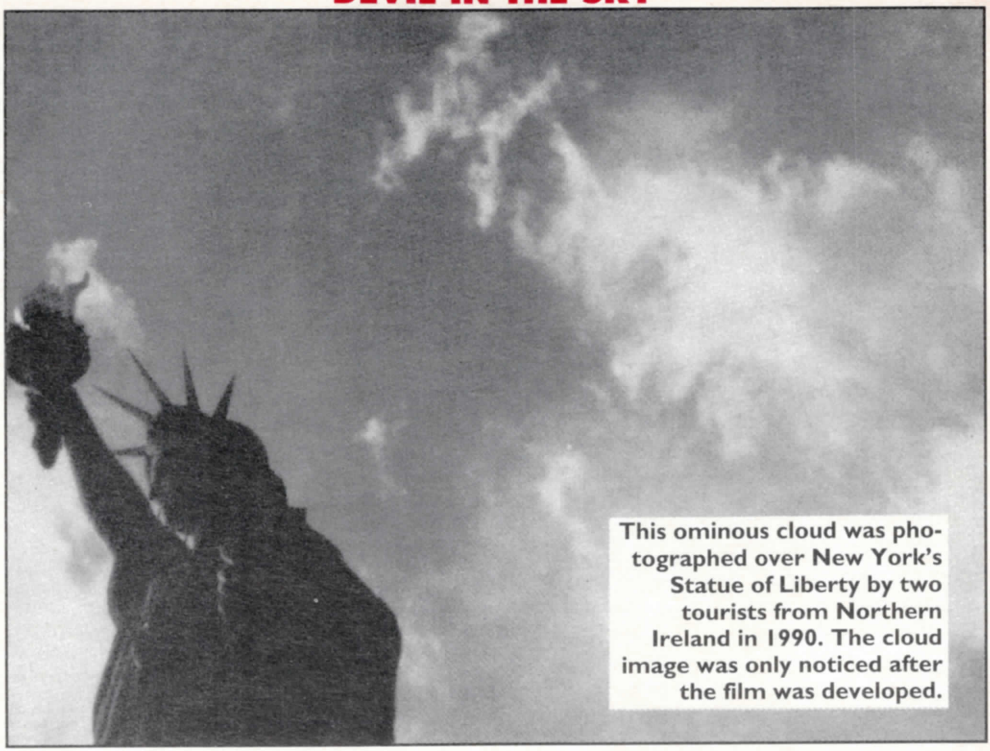
Doris Irish, 76, of Stockton, Cleveland, holding a lightbulb that was still working after 50 years. She bought it for sixpence at Woolworths in 1941.



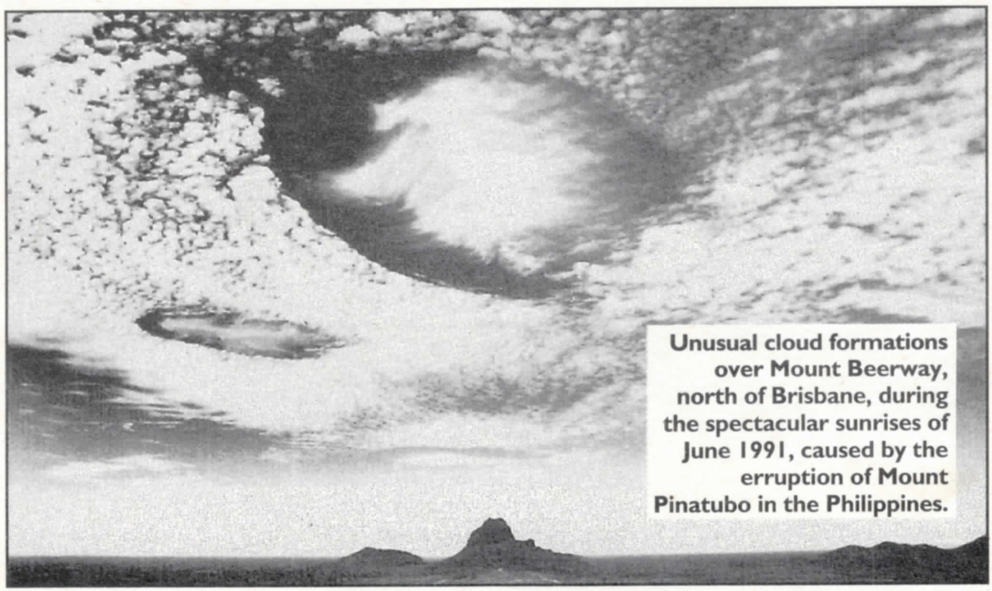
The bodies of some saints seem to be preserved miraculously. Our photo shows the incorrupt body of St Bernadette Soubirous, the visionary of Lourdes, who died in 1879. Her body was exumed in 1909 and again in 1919, and now lies in a special chapel in Nevers, France.

DEAD SAINT

DEVIL IN THE SKY



This ominous cloud was photographed over New York's Statue of Liberty by two tourists from Northern Ireland in 1990. The cloud image was only noticed after the film was developed.

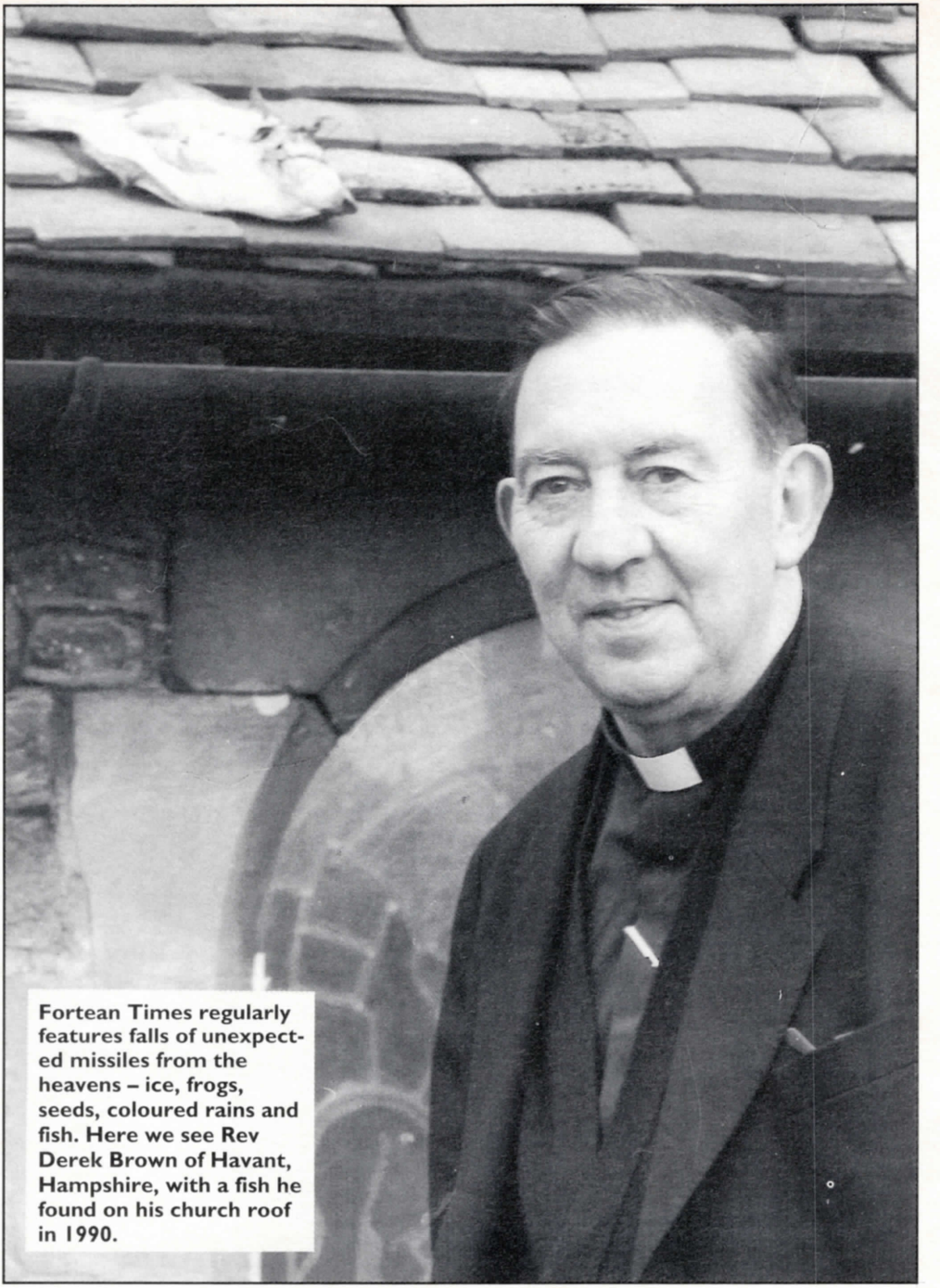


Unusual cloud formations over Mount Beerway, north of Brisbane, during the spectacular sunrises of June 1991, caused by the erruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines.

O IN THE OZONE

The most puzzing cases of spontaneous human combustion usually involve a rapid blaze, intense enough to consume almost totally yet which leaves combustible objects nearby only singed. Here we see all that remained of Dr Irving Bentley, of Pennsylvania, who was burned to death in 1966.

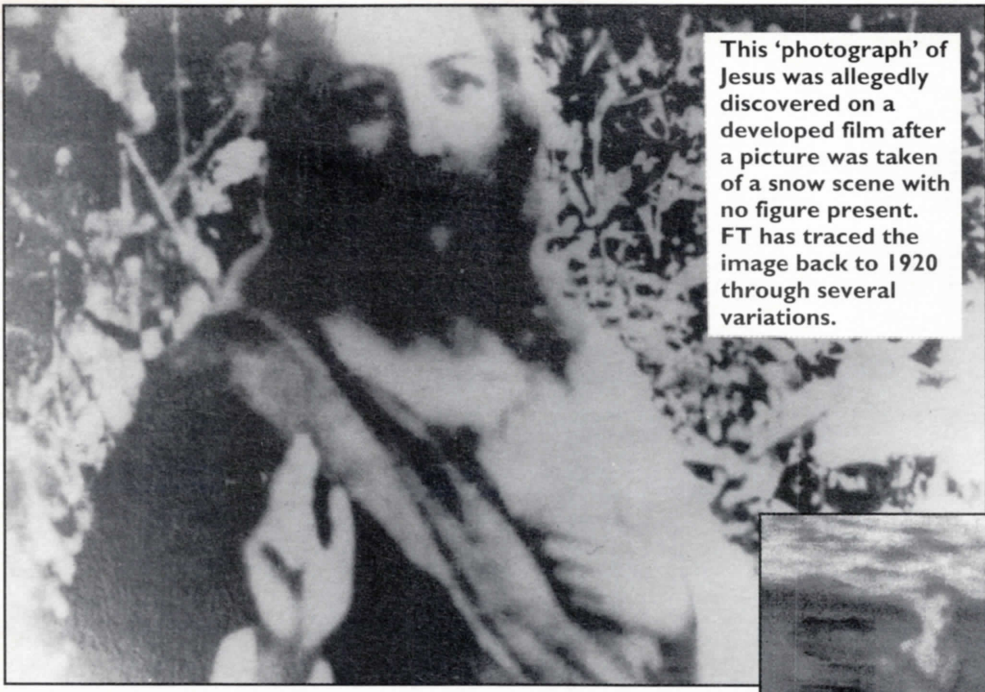
ASHES TO ASHES



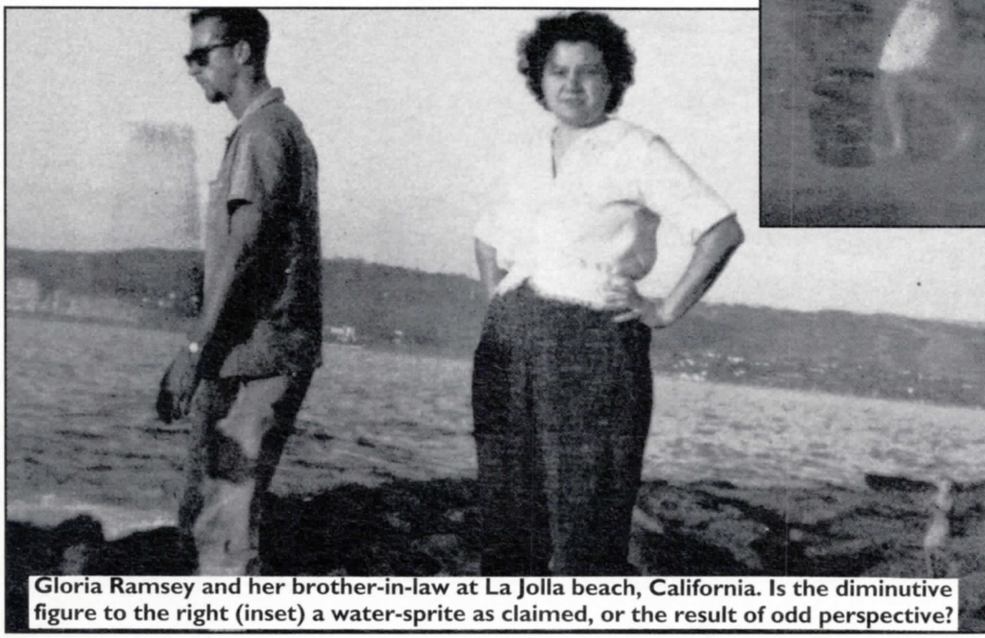
Fortean Times regularly features falls of unexpected missiles from the heavens – ice, frogs, seeds, coloured rains and fish. Here we see Rev Derek Brown of Havant, Hampshire, with a fish he found on his church roof in 1990.

CLERIC WITH FISH

PHOTO-JESUS

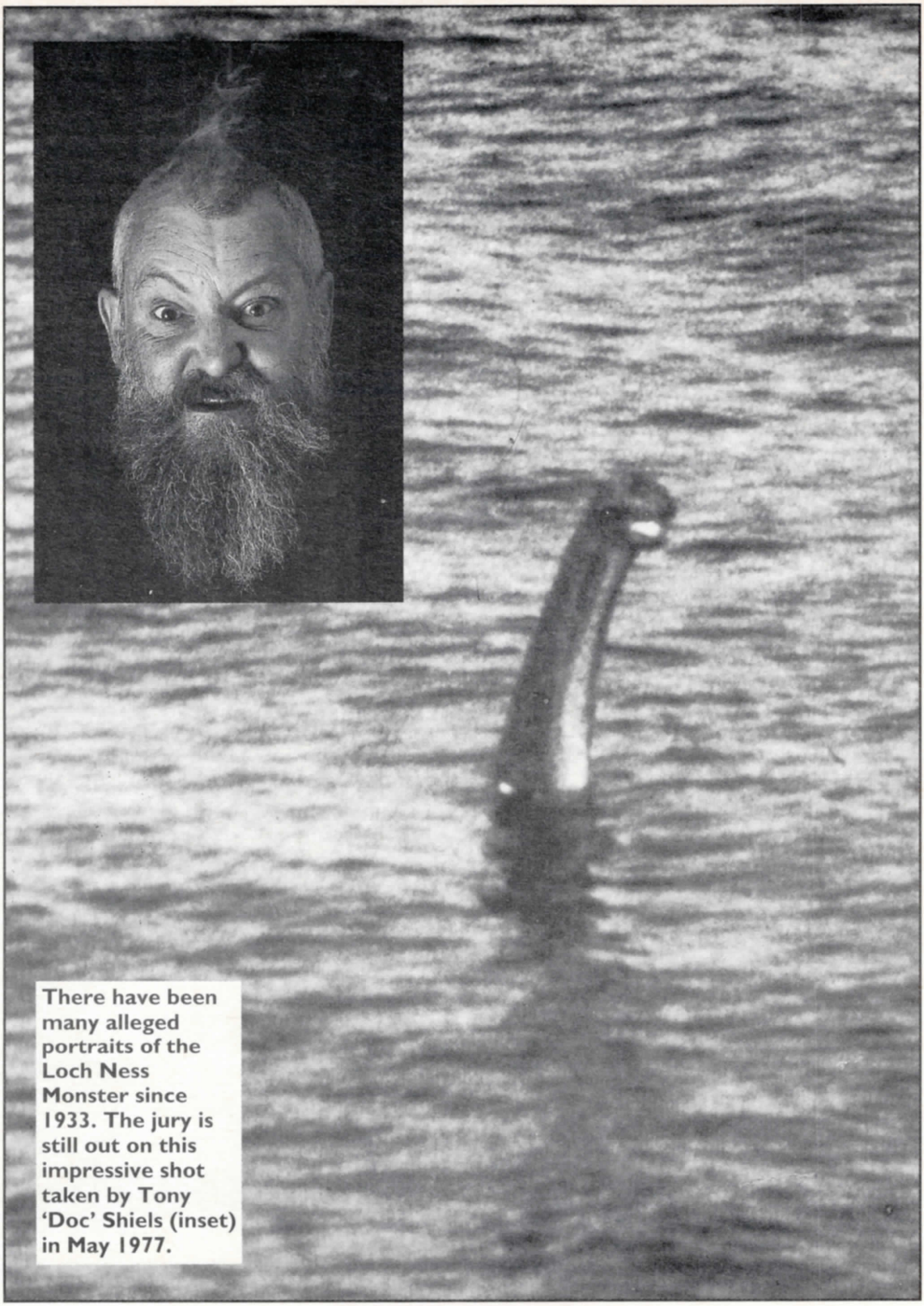


This 'photograph' of Jesus was allegedly discovered on a developed film after a picture was taken of a snow scene with no figure present. FT has traced the image back to 1920 through several variations.



Gloria Ramsey and her brother-in-law at La Jolla beach, California. Is the diminutive figure to the right (inset) a water-sprite as claimed, or the result of odd perspective?

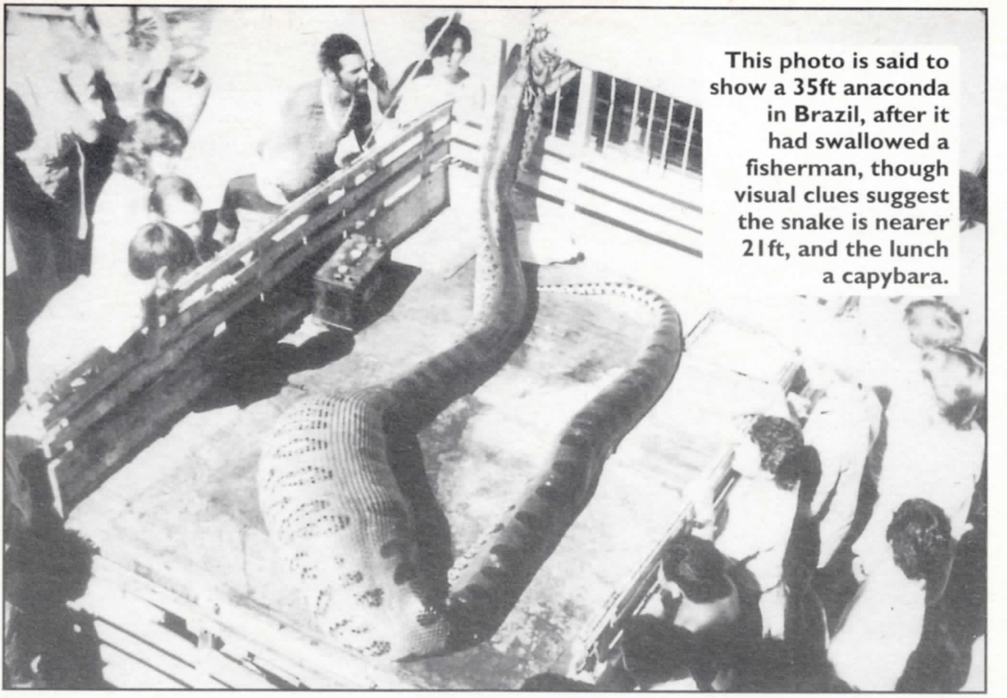
WATER SPRITE



There have been many alleged portraits of the Loch Ness Monster since 1933. The jury is still out on this impressive shot taken by Tony 'Doc' Shiels (inset) in May 1977.

LOCH NESS MONSTER

MAN IN A SNAKE



This photo is said to show a 35ft anaconda in Brazil, after it had swallowed a fisherman, though visual clues suggest the snake is nearer 21ft, and the lunch a capybara.

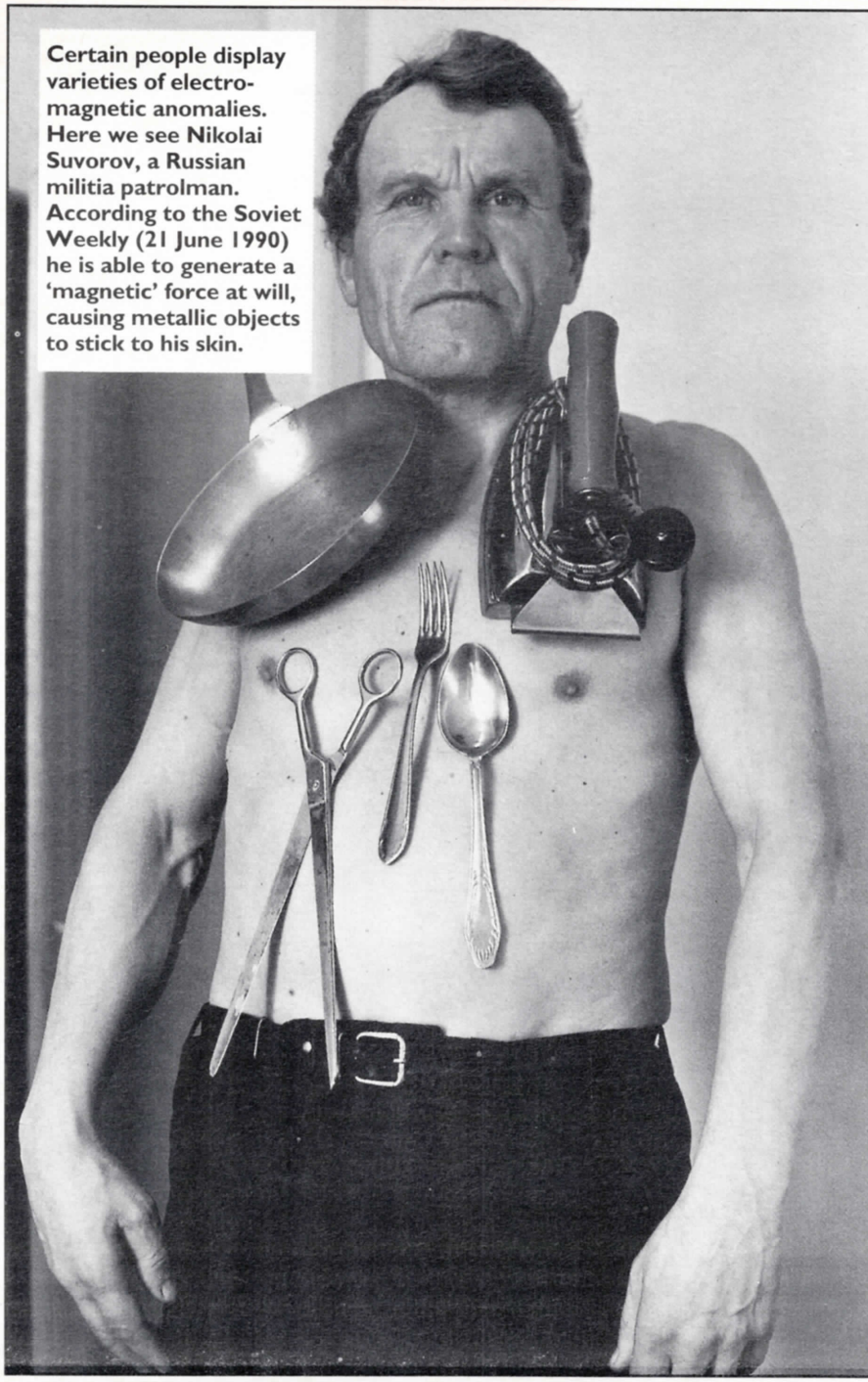
While investigating a house plagued by a poltergeist in 1984, Fred Shannon of the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch heard Tina Resch shriek, and snapped this telephone set in mid-flight across her lap.

FLYING TELEPHONE

KITTEN WITH WINGS

Normal domestic cats occasionally sport a pair of furry flaps. We were particularly pleased to discover this rare photograph of a 'winged' cat found in a Manchester builder's yard in the 1960s. The cat had 11-inch 'wings' and a flat tail.

MAGNETIC MAN



Certain people display varieties of electro-magnetic anomalies. Here we see Nikolai Suvorov, a Russian militia patrolman. According to the Soviet Weekly (21 June 1990) he is able to generate a 'magnetic' force at will, causing metallic objects to stick to his skin.

PHOTOGRAPH COPYRIGHTS: 5 Empics. 6t unknown. 6b Agencia EFE. 7t North News & Pictures. 7b unknown. 8 Clifford Scullion and Denise McNinch. 8 (inset) Associated Press. 9 Larry Arnold/Fortean Picture Library. 10 Portsmouth Publishing & Print. 11b unknown. 11t & 12 Fortean Picture Library. 13t Rex Features. 13b Associated Press. 14 Fortean Picture Library.

© Fortean Times/John Brown Publishing Ltd 1993.